

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 184220

FOR ASST SECRETARY LEWIS

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM BELGRADE DATED JULY 24, 1976 SENT
SECSTATE WASHDC, USUN NEW YORK IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 4859

FROM SCRANTON FOR LEWIS (IO)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UN XG YO OVIP

SUBJ: SCRANTON-MINIC MEETING - PUERTO RICO

1. GOVERNOR SCRANTON MET WITH YUGOSLAVIA'S FOREIGN SECRETARY
MILOS MINIC AT SVETI STEFAN JUL 23, 1976. DURING THEIR MEETING
THEY DISCUSSED PUERTO RICO.

2. SCRANTON STRESSED TO MINIC THAT THE PUERTO RICANS COULD
OPT FOR ANY STATUS (INDEPENDENCE OR OTHER) THEY SHOULD CHOSE.
HE POINTED OUT THAT THE PHILIPPINES, HAWAII, AND PUERTO RICO EACH HAD
CHOSEN A DIFFERENT COURSE. THE U.S.G. AND PEOPLE, HOWEVER,
WERE MOST CONCERNED LEST ANY OUTSIDE GROUP INTERFERE WITH WHAT
WE CONSIDER AN INTERNAL U.S. AFFAIR. SCRANTON REFERRED TO
OUR AIDE MEMOIRE LEFT WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN SECRETARY MOJSOV
EARLIER IN THE DAY. SCRANTON URGED THAT
YUGOSLAVIA SUPPORT OUR POSITION ON PUERTO RICO AT COLOMBO AND
IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24. SCRANTON WARNED THAT, IF PUERTO RICO
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REACHED THE UNGA, WE WOULD WALK OUT.

3. MINIC SAID THAT NUMEROUS CARIBBEAN AND OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES HAD SHARED THEIR VIEW WITH YUGOSLAVIA THAT THE PUERTO RICANS HAD NOT EXERCISED THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION. THESE POWERS CONSIDERED THAT ALL THE PUERTO RICAN REFERENDUMS HELD TO DATE HAD BEEN HELD UNDER U.S. SUPRVISION LONG AFTER RPT AFTER THE U.S. HAD TAKEN POSSESSION OF PUERTO RICO. MINIC SAID THAT A NEW REFERENDUM HELD UNDER UN SUPERVISION WOULD RESOLVE THE PROBLEM AND GET RID OF IT. HE EXPRESSED YUGOSLAVIA'S VIEW THAT PUERTO RICO'S PEOPLE INDEED DESIRED ASSOCIATION WITH THE U.S., BUT THAT FROM A PURELY "LEGAL" POINT OF VIEW UN-SUPERVISED REFERENDUM WAS NEEDED TO CONFIRM PUERTO RICO'S EXIT FROM THE STATUS OF A NON-SELF GOVERNING TERRITORY.

4. WHEN SCRANTON STRESSED THAT A WHOLE SERIES OF PUERTO RICAN REFERENDUMS COULD NOT BE IGNORED AND CONTRASTED THIS WITH THE SITUATION RE THE BALTIC STATES, MINIC REMAINED SILENT.

5. RECOMMENDATION: MINIC'S THESIS WAS CLEAR THAT IT WAS NOT CUBA ALONE AMONG THE NONALIGNED WHICH SUPPORTED "SELF-DETERMINATION" FOR PUERTO RICO, AND THUS BY IMPLICATION AT LEAST QUESTIONED THE UNGA'S 1953 ACTION REMOVING PUERTO RICO FROM THE LIST OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES. HE CLAIMED TOO THAT NONALIGNED ACTION ON PUERTO RICO AS OUTLINED ABOVE REFLECTS VIEWS OF THE LATIN AMERICAN MEMBERSHIP. ("THEY MAY TELL YOU OTHERWISE BUT THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL RPT ALL TELL US AT ALL NON-ALIGNED MEETINGS"). ACCORDINGLY, STRONG RECOMMENDATION IS MADE THAT WE ACT URGENTLY RPT URGENTLY TO SOUND OUT LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS ON THIS KEY MATTER FOR COLOMBO MEETING, COMMITTEE OF 24, AND UNGA. THE YUGOSLAVS ALLEGED THAT ALL RPT ALL THE LATIN AMERICAN NONALIGNED MEMBERS AND OBSERVERS, INCLUDING ARGENTINA (MEMBER) AND BRAZIL (OBSERVER), HAD SHARED THIS VIEW WITH YUGOSLAVIA THAT "SELF-DETERMINATION" WAS NEEDED IN PUERTO RICO. SILBERMAN UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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